

**Remarks/Arguments:**

The disclosure has been objected to. In particular, the Official Action indicates that it is unclear how pressure is reduced back to the target pressure.

Regulator 28 "vents" fluid to the outside world. When the fluid is air or other harmless gas, the fluid is merely vented to the atmosphere by regulator 28. This is a very common type of regulator which is sometimes known as a relieving regulator.

This action is explained in U.S. Patent No. 4,589,815 beginning at line 10, Col. 7 (with reference to Fig. 10). The regulator in Fig. 10 in the '815 patent is of a similar type to regulator 28 of the present application. The '815 is cited in the present application at page 4, line 15 and page 2, line 2.

The operation of regulators is also well known in the art. See Parr, Andrew, Hydraulics and Pneumatics, A Technician's and Engineer's Handbook, 1998. Accordingly, it would be known to one of ordinary skill in the art how the pressure is reduced back to the target pressure.

Claims 1-24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph for the reasons given in the objection to the disclosure. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested in view of the explanation set forth above.

Various claims have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Specific language in certain claims was quoted in the Official Action. The various language referred to in the Official Action has been corrected.

Claims 1-17 and 19-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103 as obvious over Slocum. It is respectfully submitted, however, that the claims are now patentable over Slocum for the reasons set forth below.

Slocum, Fig. 4B discloses cylinder 468 which defines cavities 472. Cavities 472 are pressurized to a constant pressure. When sufficient force is applied, cylinder 468 moves relative to cylinder 470. Again, it is noted that cavities 472 are outside of cylinder 468.

Applicant's Fig. 1 illustrates a positioning apparatus which includes bottom cylinder 7 and top cylinder 8. As illustrated in Applicant's Fig. 3, fluid is introduced into fluid holding compartment 23 via fluid line 25. The amount of fluid in fluid holding compartment 23 is regulated in order to cause top cylinder 8 to move up or down relative to bottom cylinder 7.

Applicant's invention, as recited by claim 1, includes a feature which is neither disclosed nor suggested by the art of record, namely:

... a first cylindrical member ...

... a second cylindrical member ...

... said first cylindrical member ... above said second cylindrical member ...

... said first cylindrical member and said second cylindrical member defining a variable size fluid compartment within said first cylindrical member ...

Again, the claimed variable sized fluid compartment corresponds to compartment 23 of Fig. 3.

The fact that Applicant's first cylindrical member is above Applicant's second cylindrical member, and that Applicant's first cylindrical member is a variable size fluid compartment, is neither disclosed nor suggested by Slocum. While Slocum discloses variable size compartments 472, Slocum's variable size compartments 472 are not within a first cylindrical member situated above a second cylindrical member. Slocum has provided variable size compartments in order to allow for a small amount of compliance. This is different than Applicant's invention where a variable size compartment is inside of a first cylindrical member which is above a second cylindrical member. Applicant's variable size fluid compartment thus not only allows the compliance feature disclosed by Slocum, but also permits movement of a load upwards and downwards. As Applicant's feature of a variable size compartment "inside" of a first cylindrical member above a second cylindrical member is neither disclosed nor suggested by Slocum, Applicant's claim 1 is patentable over Slocum.

Applicant's claim 6 includes the feature of:

a pneumatic compliant coupling mechanism ... defining a fluid compartment ... to change volume to provide a range of motion to the test head ... said pneumatic compliant coupling mechanism being positioned

above ... said drive mechanism such that said drive mechanism moves said  
pneumatic compliant coupling mechanism ...

Thus, Applicant's drive mechanism moves the test head, and a pneumatic compliant coupling mechanism with a fluid compartment therein is above the drive mechanism and provides motion to the test head. The feature of a fluid compartment used in moving a test head which is above a drive mechanism, also for moving a test head, is neither disclosed nor suggested by Slocum. Accordingly, claim 6 is patentable over Slocum.

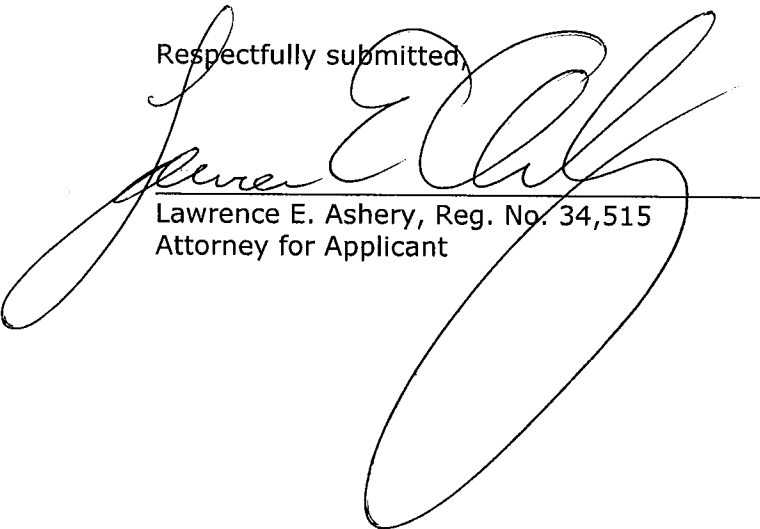
The rejection of claim 9 is respectfully traversed. Claim 9 recites the feature of fluidly suspending a test head by "maintaining a fluid pressure in the fluid compartment positioned between the test head and the drive mechanism." Again, the feature of a fluid compartment between the test head and a drive mechanism is neither disclosed nor suggested by the art of record. Accordingly, claim 9 is patentable over the art of record.

Claim 14, while not identical to claim 1, is also patentable over the art of record for reasons similar to those set forth above with regard to claim 1.

The remaining dependent claims are patentable by virtue of their dependency on allowable independent claims.

In view of the amendments and arguments set forth above, the above-identified application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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